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## **Summary:**

The aim of this paper is to see how the social and power relations, influenced by cultural and linguistic differences, affect politeness in communication between participants, particularly through the speech acts of requesting and complaining. Politeness is considered an essential element in society. It helps navigate entire relationships between participants in all kinds of situational and contextual backgrounds. Knowing politeness strategies works well in most situations in given contexts, it is what provides a feeling of safe predictability for participants when going into an interaction. Service encounters in particular have a certain duality of communicative nature which makes them interesting to examine. The participants in this study were examined in a service encounter setting, both belonging to communities of practice and one side being customers at a restaurant and the other being servers. Customers and servers represent roles in a situational context. The theoretical background focused specifically on politeness theory, strategies and service encounters. Afterwards it is followed by the research section which describes the results and provides a discussion. The final section is the conclusion. Through research in the form of an interview, subjects provided examples and descriptions of the interrelation, communication and levels of politeness between them and the members. The research proposed the idea that, along with the nature of their roles, social status and identity give a lot more power to one side in the interaction (the customer), which also influenced politeness in interactions. A difference in power and hierarchy is evident and, combined with all of the other factors, gives the full image of the complexity in the particular encounters of the service setting.

**Keywords:** politeness, requests, communication, service encounters, roles

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## 1. Introduction

Research in pragmatics is based on the idea that social relations closely influence communication and interactions. People use information they gain from social relations to produce and interpret language in interactions. Pragmatic research in the form of social studies can help explain the relationship between language, situational context and social relations. In order to do that, it is important to determine factors which make a situation where language is used in certain context.

Politeness is considered an essential element in society. It helps navigate entire relationships between participants in all kinds of situational and contextual backgrounds. Politeness gives the participants boundaries, rules of conduct and grounds to stand on. Knowing politeness strategies works well in most situations in given contexts, it is what provides a feeling of safe predictability for participants when going into an interaction. Service encounters in particular have a certain duality of communicative nature which makes them interesting to examine. On one hand, their pre-set, predictable, reliable form make them safe and easy for participants who are considered competent adults in society and who follow the rules of etiquette. On the other hand, the difference in power relations and social distance between participants (especially in very high-standard, fine dining establishments) can make the interaction stressful and risqué.

Dell Hymes presented his SPEAKING model which consists of categories which can be very useful in analyzing various kinds of discourse (Hymes 1974). Out of all the constituents of the SPEAKING model, what is significant to this research is 'participants'. Pragmatics focuses on the role and category relations of participants, in hopes of showing their mutual linguistic choices and discovering what influences them. The participants in this study were examined in a service encounter setting, both belonging to communities of practice and one side being customers at a restaurant and the other being servers. Customers and servers represent roles in a situational context.

The aim of this paper is to see how the social and power relations, influenced by cultural and linguistic differences, affect politeness in communication between participants, particularly through the speech acts of requesting and complaining.

The paper is organized as follows. The following section presents the theoretical background, focusing specifically on politeness theory, strategies and service encounters. This is followed by the research section which described the results and provides a discussion. The final section is the conclusion.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Politeness theory**

Fundamental theory on politeness was presented by Brown and Levinson in 1978 in their work *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Brown and Levinson establish the notion of face, first introduced by Erving Goffman. Goffman defined face as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman 1967 5). A line is a verbal and non-verbal pattern through which people express their view of the situation, participants and himself. Brown and Levinson make the assumption that all competent adults have ‘face’, which they define as the public self-image every member of society claims for himself. Face consists of a negative face and positive face. Negative face is “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction” (Brown and Levinson 1994 61). Positive face is “the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ claimed by interactants” (Brown and Levinson 1994 61). The aspects of face can be treated as basic wants as well. In that respect, negative face is the want of competent adult members of society to have his actions not be impeded by other people and positive face is the want that the person’s own wants are considered desirable by other members of society. Aside from face, Brown and Levinson mention all competent adult members of society are assumed to have rational capacities (Brown and Levinson 1994 61). It means that people follow a logical

guideline in rationally passing from ends to means in a way which is the most satisfactory (Brown and Levinson 1994 65).

The notion of face is especially important in every interaction and it must be constantly thought of because it can be lost or enhanced in communication. During an interaction, participants constantly cooperate in order to maintain face because mutual maintaining of faces is in every participant's best interest. This is because if a participant's face is threatened, he will naturally defend his face thus threatening the face of the other participant through his defensiveness. There are types of acts which intrinsically threaten face and they are achieved by verbal and non-verbal communication. They are called face threatening acts and the basic distinction between acts are of those that threaten the hearer and those that threaten the speaker. In order to better understand how the face is threatened in an interaction between participants, we need to assess both the acts that threaten both the negative face and positive face of the hearer and the speaker. The following discussion is based on definitions from Brown and Levinson's aforementioned work *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*.

#### **2.1.1. Face threatening acts to the hearer**

- **Face threatening acts to the hearer's negative face**

The acts that primarily threaten the hearer's negative face are those which show that the speaker will not avoid impeding the hearer's freedom of action.

The first type of those acts are performed by putting pressure on the hearer to do or refrain from doing something. This is done by using orders and requests, giving suggestions, advice and reminders or by using threats, warnings and dares.

The second type of acts predicate a positive future act from the speaker to the hearer by putting the pressure on the hearer to either accept or reject the speaker. This is done by using offers, where the hearer will commit to an act of the speaker towards him and thus leaving him indebted to the speaker or promises, where the speaker commits to a future action for the hearer's sake.

The third type of acts show the speaker's desire for the hearer's goods, after which the hearer thinks he might have to give the goods to the speaker or protect them from the speaker.



This is done by using compliments and admiring the goods or using expressions of envy, showing that the speaker desires them. It can also be done in a more extreme way by using expressions of strong negative emotions towards the hearer, such as anger, hatred and lust, where the speaker demonstrates an incline for harming the hearer's goods. This last type of acts will not be dealt with in this paper, as the participants in the research are not close or familiar enough to feel such strong emotions, nor are they in situations which would allow them to do these acts. However, the first type of acts, more specifically making requests, will be one of the main research points of this paper.

- **Face threatening acts to the hearer's positive face**

Acts that threaten the hearer's positive face usually indicate that the speaker does not care about the hearer's feelings and wants or about preserving them. The speaker shows he does not respect, value and desire the hearer's positive face wants. There are two basic types of face threatening acts here.

The first type of acts show the speaker's negative evaluation of aspects of the hearer's positive face. This is done by using expressions of disapproval, criticism, ridicule, insults or complaints and reprimands. It can also be done by the speaker contradicting, challenging or disagreeing with the hearer, showing that the speaker believes the hearer is misguided or unreasonable.

The second type of acts show the speaker's disregard and lack of care about the hearer's positive face. This is seen in uncontrolled expressions of violent emotions, usually making the hearer embarrassed by the speaker or even fear him in more extreme cases. It can also be done by mentioning taboo topics, bringing on good or bad news about the hearer. Furthermore, it can be done by mentioning very emotional or divisive subjects, such as those relating to politics, race, religion etc.

It is important to note that only the first type of face threatening acts to the hearer's positive face were noticed in the research of this paper, specifically customer complaints in the service encounter setting.

### **2.1.2. Face threatening acts to the speaker**

- **Face threatening acts to the speaker's negative face**

Acts that threaten the speaker's negative face are usually brought on by expressing thanks or accepting an apology (forcing the speaker to humble himself), making excuses (this implies that the speaker was just criticized), accepting offers (constraining the speaker to a debt) or making unwilling promises and offers (committing to future acts the speaker actually does not want to commit to thus restraining his freedom of action). It can also be done by responding to the hearer's faux pas, in which case the hearer's face will be threatened if the speaker notices it or the speaker is threatened if he pretends not to notice.

- **Face threatening acts to the speaker's positive face**

Acts that directly damage the speaker's positive face are usually apologies, showing regret about the previous face threatening act he committed. Apologies will be especially dealt with in the research of this paper because the situational context of the participant's interactions is always service encounters in a restaurant, where apologies are made very often.

Aside from apologies, a speaker's positive face can be threatened by acceptance of a compliment, losing physical control over the body (i.e. falling down or bodily leakage) and control over emotions, making admissions of guilt or responsibility and expressing self-humiliation (self-contradicting, cowering or acting 'stupid').

### **2.1.3. Politeness strategies**

Even though competent, rational adult members of society should always strive to mutually maintain face in interactions, it is not always possible. This is why it is important to attempt to minimize the threat, unless the intention is to threaten the face of hearer for some

reason. In order to minimize the threat, one must take into account different contextual and situational factors with which he or she can then use to make a face threatening act. The speaker needs to take into consideration at least three wants: the want to communicate the content of the FTA, the want to be efficient or urgent and the want to maintain the hearer's face. The only case when the speaker should not put too much emphasis on minimizing the threat to the hearer's face is when the need to be efficient or urgent is more prominent and the disregard is more understandable. However, disregarding the minimization of threat can also be the speaker's purposeful desire.

Brown and Levinson propose four possible strategies for doing face threatening acts. Strategies can be used consciously, in order to manipulate the situation, or very often they happen on a subconscious level (Brown and Levinson 1994 85). The four possible strategies are on record, off record, positive politeness and negative politeness, with the addition of a fifth strategy which is to decide not to make a face threatening act at all or to abandon it.

The first is going on record, which does not attempt to minimize the threat. The speaker directly, unambiguously and boldly does the act. Because this is shocking to the hearer, it is mostly used when the speaker and hearer both agree that the relevance of face demands is less important than the urgency or efficiency of the situation. It is often used in situations when the speaker has a close relationship with the speaker. Also, it can be used if the threat to the hearer's face is very small and whatever is discussed is clearly in his interest.

Another type of circumstance for bald acts is when the speaker is so superior in power to the hearer that he even damage the hearer's face in front of an audience without damaging his own face (Brown and Levinson 1994 69). This is the aspect which will be examined in the research of this paper because there is great emphasis on power relations and social distance between the participants. Taking their roles into consideration as well, it is evident that bold face threatening acts can happen more frequently.

A very different strategy is going off record. These acts are very indirect, ambiguous and cannot be directly attributed with a specific intention. Linguistic realizations of off record acts are usually metaphor and irony, hints, rhetorical questions and understatements. They are indirect on purpose so that the meaning can still be negotiated and the speaker's face is not imposing.

After mentioning two contrasting, somewhat extreme types of strategy, where one is completely direct and without redress and the other is very indirect, we must look into two forms of redressive action: positive politeness and negative politeness.

Positive politeness strategies are used to approach the positive face of the hearer by emphasizing empathy and friendliness. The speaker shows that he wants the hearer's wants and treats the hearer as a person whose personality traits are liked. Because of this, face threats to the hearer are minimized.

Negative politeness, on the other hand, is a strategy performed to avoid offense through deference and satisfying the hearer's negative face. It is based on the speaker's knowledge and respect of the hearer's negative face wants. The speaker will mostly avoid disturbing the hearer's freedom of action. This is done by using formality, restraint and self-effacement. Here the FTAs are redressed by using a lot of apologies and linguistic and non-linguistic deference. Hedges and passives are often used, as well as other mechanisms which leave the hearer with an 'out', so that he does not feel his actions are limited and coerced.

One notion that is important to mention here is conventionalized indirectness. This is used when a speaker needs to go on record for some reason, but wants go off record in order not to impose. Examples are many indirect questions conventionalized in the on record form, such as 'can you' questions. Conventionalized indirectness applies to the research of this paper because it deals with service encounters, where the participants hold roles and behave according to a 'service script'. In typical restaurant communication there are many such examples, purely because of practical reasons which required more direct, to the point requests which will not be understood as threatening and too direct. Examples are 'We would like a table for two', 'Can you bring us more water?' 'I want my steak rare' 'I will have a glass of red wine' etc. In this case it could be argued that the customer would add an expression of deference such as 'please' to most such requests, but not necessarily.

Another important part of the negative politeness strategy is hedging. Hedging was defined as a "particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected" (Brown and Levinson 1994 145). Hedging is usage of precautionary measures by speakers in order to protect themselves from the negative effect of their utterances and to protect hearers from harm to their face (Boncea 2013 8).

Hedges are usually represented by lexical verbs, such as ‘seem’, ‘tend’ and ‘appear’, modals like ‘may’ and ‘might’ and adverbs such as ‘probably’ and ‘perhaps’. Conditional clauses, passive voices, and impersonal phrases can also be used in place of hedges as they can have ‘hedging powers’ (Boncea 2013 10). In regards to this paper, hedging is connected to the subjects of the research who have the role of servers at a restaurant. The servers in particular are the British students who have reported on using excessive politeness (meaning hedging) in communication with customers. The British servers noticed a difference between them and the American customers, in that the American customers use a lot less hedging and are a lot more direct in all aspects of communication. The servers reported that they had to adapt their utterances to the new environment, even though the Americans found the initial differences ‘charming’ but odd, not in a negative way. This directly points to cultural differences influencing linguistic choices, as well as social relations and interactions.

#### **2.1.3.1. Payoffs of strategies**

Brown and Levinson argue that any rational speakers will want to choose the same type of strategy under the same conditions, meaning that everyone would make the same moves under the same circumstances. Particular strategies carry certain payoffs or advantages and it depends on relevant circumstances how advantageous the payoffs will be.

First, we will take a look at payoffs with different strategies. A speaker who chooses to go on record will have a greater chance of gaining public support for putting pressure on a hearer. The speaker can gain credit for honesty because by being so direct, he shows the hearer that he trusts him and feels that their relationship is close enough to speak in such a way. The speaker will also avoid being seen as a manipulator and will remove the possibility of being understood.

A speaker who goes off record will profit from being seen as tactful and unobtrusive. He will avoid responsibility for face threatening interpretation and will give the hearer an opportunity to look generous and cooperative through asking for something in an indirect way and the hearer then offering it.

A speaker who goes on record with positive politeness will receive the payoff of avoiding or minimizing debt from FTA by using a plural voice in which the hearer is included. It is also in

minimizing the threat to the hearer's face by assuring the hearer that they are the same and have similar wants. This way, the social distance is decreased and sense of solidarity is increased.

A speaker who goes on record with negative politeness will have the benefit of paying respect to the hearer and avoid a future debt. The speaker can maintain the social distance and not advance familiarity.

The payoff of the 'fifth' FTA strategy, or not doing the FTA, is completely avoiding the possibility of offending the hearer. However, it also does not give the speaker an opportunity to communicate what he wants (Brown and Levinson 1994: 72). This FTA strategy, although not very substantial because of its nature, actually showed to have an important role in the research of this paper. Because the participants in the case of that research are so far apart in terms of power relations, the 'weaker' participant (a server at the restaurant) must often give up saying an FTA because it is very risky for them to offend the hearer.

Three sociological factors that make the circumstances of the face threatening act are the social distance, the relative power and the absolute ranking of impositions in a particular culture. These three factors affect the assessment of seriousness of an FTA and will affect the choice of an FTA strategy.

The factor of social distance is a symmetric dimension of similarity or difference between the speaker and hearer. It distinguishes a closer friend or family member from a person who is a stranger. It is usually based on the frequency of interaction and, more importantly, on stable social attributes.

Relative power, on the other hand, is an asymmetric dimension. It is the degree to which the hearer can overpower the speaker by imposing his own plans and face in general at the expense of the speaker's own. Two general sources of relative power are material control over economic distribution and physical force and metaphysical control over the acts of others. Usually these sources of power overlap and come from both. Relative power can also be defined as not attached to individuals, but roles. So, in the role-set of an employee-employer, as is researched in this paper, the asymmetrical power is implied to be attached to the roles.

The third factor, which is the absolute ranking of impositions in a particular culture, is defined by the degree to which the impositions interfere with the participant's negative and positive face wants. The rankings of negative face impositions in a particular domain in a particular culture are set in proportion to expenditure (related to impositions regarding goods or

services). It can be seen in lessening impositions on a person given by obligations to do an act and the enjoyment a person gets out of the act and in the increasing of impositions determined by why a person should not or could not do an act. In regards to FTAs against a person's positive face, the ranking of impositions focuses on how much pain it caused the positive face. Cultural rankings of aspects of positive face are success, niceness, beauty etc. There are also personal functions on the rankings which show that some people are more imposed by certain FTAs than others. People who know very well how to assess these rankings are considered tactful and charming (Brown and Levinson 1994 78).

The seriousness of FTAs can apply to both the speaker and hearer. Seriousness or weightiness of an FTA is determined by the metaphorical summation of all three factors. These factors can be calculated in different combinations and variations, which influences the choice of FTA strategy, along with payoffs associated with each strategy.

## **2.2 Pragmatics and social studies**

Studies into social factors are an important part of understanding linguistic ideas. Social studies give the linguistic pragmatics a foundation for each individual case, speaking of its causes, history and logic.

The features which are usually covered in such a study are language, gender, age, class and geographical location. When doing such studies, researchers always use corpora, which are written and spoken texts, collected and stored in databases (Cutting 2008 53). Corpora have specifically been used to study domains of discourse, which means the study is focused on interactions typical of specific settings. It can be an office setting, shops, classrooms, hospitals or, as it will be examined in this paper, restaurants. Corpora serve as a background basis which help pragmatics define and explain features of a specific social group interaction (Cutting 2008 59). The research of this paper will analyze spoken secondary corpora.

The specific groups mentioned above make communities of practice, which are groups of people brought together by common interests, activities, beliefs, values, power relations etc. Two conditions need to be fulfilled in order for a group to be defined as a community of practice: shared experience over time and a commitment to shared understanding (Eckert 2006). This can

be seen on the example of servers working at the restaurant from the research of this paper. There were more than twenty of them and most of them are British, with the exception of a few Croatian servers. All of them are students between the ages of 19 and 25. Even though they were already very connected by having similar backgrounds and same nationalities (Croatian and British), they truly formed as a community of practice by sharing the same experiences over time. The community of practice in this case is primarily defined by sharing the same work responsibilities and requirements, bringing the servers to a collaboration as a group to define themselves with respect to the world around them. They see themselves as individuals, but at the same time as part of a collective.

The servers also lived in a dormitory on the premises of the country club where the restaurant is situated. The British servers share the same way of talking and similar, strong accents, most use common slang words and mention a lot of familiar, shared concepts, things and places belonging to their culture. Even though the Croatians were a smaller group of only three women, they also kept their individual, shared value, which is their language only they can speak and understand, in order to communicate more privately amongst everyone else. This was at times taken with apprehension by others. However, because the British and Croatians lived and worked together in very close quarters for long hours they grew accustomed to the cultural differences between themselves. They acquired a feeling of shared understanding of their purpose and identity quite quickly, thus making them separate communities on a smaller scale, but much more importantly a solid community of practice as servers.

Another example of a community of practice are the customers at the restaurant. The customers, members of the golf and country club, share many common interests as a community of golfers, businessmen and housewives. As businessmen they are very wealthy and display their wealth accordingly at the club with other likeminded, similar people. They mostly live close by in the suburbs surrounding the country club making them connected as neighbors. Their most important shared understanding are feelings of privilege and entitlement because of importance and social worth in their own individual lives, which also defines their behavior and expectations of service at the country club restaurant.

Many are very frequent guests at the club and actively spend time together there. Their shared experience over time is related to their social status, but also on a smaller scale to their membership at the club. They visit the same golf course, eat at the same restaurants with new



servers who come every summer and stay for a year. With some being members for more than 50 years or having membership through their grandfathers and fathers, they have a sense of familiarity with not only each other, but with the club in general.

### **2.2.1 Service encounters**

Going back to studies that use corpora to examine domains of discourse, there are many different areas of communication being examined. For the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on service encounters, more specifically a restaurant setting at a golf and country club. In order to have a better understanding of the research of this paper and its results, we must look into what service encounters are and how the relationships between the servers and customers are created. A service encounter is defined as a period of time during which a customer directly interacts with a service, more specifically the personnel, physical facilities and any other elements belonging to the service during a certain period of time (Bitner 1990 70).

Michael Guiry, in his article *Consumer and Employee Roles in Service Encounters*, states that consumers, in this case restaurant customers, evaluate service quality of an establishment based on five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Out of these five dimensions, three relate directly to customer and service employee interaction. They are responsiveness, defined as willingness to provide customers with helpful service promptly; assurance, defined as knowledge and courtesy of employees who need to inspire trust, confidence and capability; and empathy or the caring and personalized attention provided to individual customers. The reliability of a service depends on service employee performance in regards to customer expectations. Customer expectations are very important because they depend on how the customers think they should be treated in a service encounter – whether they expect close contact or service from a distance. The meanings of the aforementioned dimensions will differ depending on the consumers' wants of participation in the service process as well (Guiry 1992).

In regards to the research of this paper, the dimensions apply because of the traditional and formal settings of the restaurant. If it was a casual, fast-food restaurant in question, the expectations of the dimensions would not be as pronounced and important. In this case, the

customers are very high-profile individuals accustomed to perfect fine-dining service performance. Responsiveness, assurance and empathy must be at a very high level without question, usually implying the need for additional knowledge and effort. The restaurant in question follows the rule of customers dictating the meaning of the dimensions by how much they want to participate in the service and how close or distant they want the service to be. This will be seen in many aspects of the research because the expectations of customers greatly influence the social relationships and interactions between the servers and customers.

Because most interactions in a service setting have a specific purpose, society has defined ritualized behavior patterns which direct such encounters. Looking into these ritualized patterns will help us understand the expectations of both servers and customers in the research of this paper. Each participant has a learned role which depends on social and situational cues. This idea is called role theory, which studies behavior associated with socially defined positions. The participants follow a pre-set 'script' which is appropriate for the situation and represents expectations of both parties (Solomon 1985 102). Accordingly, many problems between customers and service employees usually stem from not following the rules of the 'service script'. When customers and service employees do not play their prescribed roles, the service encounter will most likely end in dissatisfaction. Mutual understanding is crucial to a satisfying and fulfilling interaction, with employees anticipating the needs and expectations of customers (Guiry 1992).

The research of this paper demonstrates the existence of roles and prescribed behavior. As was already mentioned, the setting is a formal restaurant which follows a strict set of protocols. However, the situation is a lot different than would be at a regular restaurant, formal or not. The roles of customers and employees (servers) are far more complex because of a few factors. The customers at the restaurant are exclusively members of the country club (and the occasional outside guests they bring) who are owners of the club because of the clubs' organization system. In regards to the servers, the members are in the role of their employers as well. Another factor is a high frequency of service encounters by the same participants, which brings on more familiarity and deeper relationships than would be at a regular restaurant. On the other hand, servers at this restaurant are all young interns from other countries who are there with an educational purpose as well. The customers know quite a lot about the interns. This,

combined with how frequently many of them attend lunches and dinners at the restaurant, makes the familiarity even greater and the relationships even more complex.

However, the fundamental roles and the service script still keep the same social standards appropriate for the restaurant setting. This is evident in examples of more typical service related encounters, i.e. requests, questions and complaints about food or drinks. Still, the complexity is brought out very often in different examples which makes this particular study interesting.

### **2.2.2 Culture**

From society to society, there are obvious cultural, pragmatic differences which must be taken into account when doing a study. Culture can be defined as customs, worldview, language, kinship, social organization and other daily practices which make a certain group of people distinctive (Cutting 2008 65). In order to understand the motivation, concerns and interests of others, we must look into their culture, at least from one side or aspect. Language is in the minds of its speakers and in that way it represents the whole culture. On the other hand, culture also symbolizes language, which can be seen in the economic, religions, and philosophical systems of a country (Kuo and Lai 2006 5).

When it comes to studies which compare cultures, they can have two focuses, a pragmalinguistic one and a sociopragmatic one. Pragmalinguistic focus refers to a linguistic competence (utterances) and the sociopragmatic focus is related to customs and values. For the purpose of this paper, I will look into the pragmalinguistic differences between interactants.

Cross-cultural pragmatics provides synchronic studies of first language use by contrasting two or more social groups. Comparative data is used to show contrasts between manifestations of particular pragmatic principles in two societies at the same point in time. In this paper we will touch upon the differences in linguistic choices between people of different cultures but within the same language. However, it will not be the main point of research, as the cultures in general are all Western and speak English and thus similar in understanding of linguistic norms. What will be more thoroughly examined is linguistic choices made by culturally different people within one dominant culture and how both cultures influenced the linguistic choices of subordinate 'foreigners' simultaneously.

There are great cultural differences which determine how a language will be used and understood. Language can be seen as a communal tool which make the user who uses the tool a reflection of the community and it is a symbol of culture and a means to activate patterns belonging to a certain culture (Krauss and Chiu 1998). It is important to examine the differences found in this research because culture is essentially represented in identity. This is why it is important to take it into consideration when viewing the concepts of identity and social relations, which again influence language.

### **3. Methodology**

This paper is based on the qualitative method, more specifically grounded theory. Grounded theory is a part of sociology and it belongs in the field of qualitative analysis. In short, it is a view on theory as a process (Glaser and Strauss 1999 2). Grounded theory is a „systematic, inductive, iterative, and comparative method of data analysis for the purpose of sociological theory construction“(Wertz 2011 56). It is a way of discovering theory by using data gained from social research.

It is important to mention that I have located myself within the inquiries of this research, meaning that I have worked in the same environment along with the interviewees. The same situations which the subjects described I have prior experience with, in some cases with the exact same people, circumstances and other factors. Because of this, the ‘insider’ knowledge I have influenced the construction and purpose of the questions I asked. For the purpose of this paper I have interviewed four people by means of a loosely-structured interview consisting of ten questions. The questions were not too specific and they were presented in a neutral way, not indicating the direction I expected the answers to go. Where it was necessary I asked sub questions, which differed depending on each individual person’s answers, keeping in mind the information I was trying to acquire. The research was conducted around a setting of service encounters.

Furthermore, I have handled research and determined concepts for describing and explaining found data. The theory should have categories and hypotheses which are real and can be used again in the future in other qualitative research. They should also fit the research background and be applicable in the relevant situation. Finally, it must be understandable to most people - sociologists, students and laymen alike. I hope this has been accomplished in this paper.

### **3.1 Procedure, background and participants**

For the purpose of this research, I have interviewed four people with the same job description and requirements who work together in the same workplace. They are surrounded by mostly the same type of people. All of the questions are concentrated on their communication, mutual perception and levels of politeness. The research is focused on politeness used in communication between the members of a golf and country club and the servers who work there.

The servers work at two restaurant with separate kitchens, one is more relaxed and even with the food is more casual. Members who golf or exercise at the club usually just go there for lunch in their golfing gear or casual clothes and get a quick lunch or dinner. It also hosts barbecues and other events outside. The service is less formal there, with not as many protocols to follow when serving guests. The other restaurant is called the formal dining room and it is extremely formal, functioning mostly through reservations only and with a specific dress code for the guests.

Some important facts to mention here are that the members are very wealthy and powerful (typically Wall Street brokers who live in the suburbs which are one of the wealthiest parts of the USA and where this country club is located). The situation is quite specific because the country club in question is member owned and a lot of members spend so much time there it is like their second home. Quite a few of them are at the club every single day, or at least a couple of times a week and they usually have lunch after golfing or make reservations for dinner. Even the members who are not at the club as often know exactly how the club works. There is only a limited number of membership spots (between six and seven hundred) and a "spot" opens up only after a member or family decides to end the membership or if a member passes away. The members are the owners and decide on all the major decisions regarding the club through a

board committee. They are very well acquainted with most of the staff, from the general manager of the club (who the members appoint) down to the busboys and valets.

This research was conducted through Skype interviews. The interviews were recorded and then later transcribed. The interview consists of ten questions and various sub questions added as needed in the specific situations. The subjects were all interviewed separately.

The interviewed subjects were four women from the ages of 19 to 24. Two of them are British and the other two are Croatian. The British women are studying hospitality and live in the UK. They were at the country club for an internship for the duration of one year. During this year, they have the month of February off, which traditionally serves them as an opportunity to travel across the US. The positions they have in the internship are those of servers, but they learn other hospitality positions as well (such as running the food, front desk, managing events etc.).

The other two subjects from Croatia are summer interns working as servers and receiving the exact same treatment as the “real” interns who are there from the university for a year. The subjects are students who were on a “Work and travel” program, but they study in the fields of education and economics. They worked at the country club for 4 months and they also had an optional month to travel at the end of the program. They are fluent in English. These subjects were interviewed in Croatian so that they could feel more relaxed and potentially give more insightful answers. Some questions were modified for them based on certain facts that make them different from British interns (accent, nationality, how long they will be working there).

Throughout this paper, the interviewees will be referred to as subjects, interns, servers and students. In the instances which call for specific differentiation between the subjects, the two British subjects will be stated by the codes B1 and B2 and the Croatian subjects by C1 and C2. All of the names of people and places have been altered.

## 4. Results

While dissecting the results of the interviews, taking into the account the theoretical foundations and background to our research, a few common themes showed to be most prominent and relevant to the **research**. The questions of the research all revolve around politeness in communication between servers and customers in a restaurant at a country club.

**Comment [U1]:** Great. Please restate the aim of the research: (you said above): “All of the questions are concentrated on their communication, mutual perception and levels of politeness. The research is focused on politeness used in communication between the members of a golf and country club and the servers who work there” – restate this here. Please mention the common themes by name here – i.e. refer to them explicitly. Give each theme a name, and provide a subheading before describing each theme in the remnant of the text.

I have found three common themes in the results of the research. The first common theme I will reflect upon are social relations between servers and members. The second common theme is inequality and power relations. The third common theme is linguistic choices and non-verbal acts between the servers and members.

#### **4.1 Social relations**

The first common theme which needs to be discussed is the social relationship between the servers and members. I will need to look into their interrelation through a couple of factors. In order to explain the complex relations between the servers and members, I will first need to look into their cultural differences, which will give better insight into their self-awareness and identity. Once we have an idea of their own perceptions of identity and the identity of members, we can understand how the relationships formed and what defines them.

Even though their social relations will be somewhat defined by their typical roles in this service encounter setting, the aforementioned specific circumstances of the subjects' employment and the members' involvement with the club make the social relations more complex. By looking into the social relations between the servers and members through issues of self-awareness, perception by others and respective treatment, I have found that they share a certain familiarity which is unusual for participants in service encounters. However, it does not apply to everyone in the same way. The social distance is still mostly maintained at an expected level for that setting.

##### **4.1.1 Cultural and linguistic difference**

Cultural difference examples in the results are based on difference in accents, linguistic choices and some notions that the subjects mentioned themselves, such as humor and sarcasm, body language and willingness to help others,

In relation to their employment and the fact that they are foreign students working in a different country, Subject B2 thinks that members see having foreign students at the club as a good thing. She claims it is because it due to cultural difference, it makes the servers more

interesting to the members and it gives both sides more to talk about. There is also a hint of a parenting, even condescending attitude towards the interns, as subject B2 noticed, where the members try to convey to the interns that this server job is not a good job. The members tell them that they should go back to the university and remind them that the university is the way to go, not to stay in America to work as a server but to study to work at better positions. “A lot of people have said: “Go back to university and then never pick up another tray and polish glasses again in your life”” (Emma 2).

Subject C1 noticed that members also care a lot about what the interns think of them. This can be connected to the parenting attitude mentioned above. It could point to the fact that members want to present not only themselves as individuals in a positive light, but to also provide the interns with the best possible image of America as a whole. This is in part fueled by their own ego, but also because of their feeling of shared American identity. As Americans with ideas of exceptionalism embedded in their psyche, they have a sense of responsibility to be good hosts because they are representing what they believe to be a culturally superior nation by helping the students have a good experience working at the club.

Subject B1 says a similar thing, claiming the members helped the interns adapt and that the members think they have adapted really well. However, according to B1, the members realize that the interns work there in a “community” with twenty other British people and that they work long hours so they are not truly exposed to “real” American culture as much. They do not really see the outside world as much and members have commented on that fact on numerous occasions.

Going back to more specific differences between the members and servers, it is important to show the self-awareness of British and Croatian servers in that particular work environment. They were asked if they thought their accent helps them in situations with members, potentially helping the development of social relations between them. Accents of interns are a factor in determining social relations because if the servers were also from America, they would not be as interesting to members and the members would not further the conversation from the typical service script. However, because they notice a different accent, they are most likely to be immediately more interested in the server and are more inclined to start a personal conversation with them. Considering how the members spend a lot of time at the restaurant of the club, it is evident that it will affect the relations between them. The members will be more prone to form



deeper relations by stepping out of the boundaries of the service script and the roles they have in the service setting.

The two Croatian subjects both said that a lot of the members told them that they sound very American and that they sound as if English is their first language. The subjects are fluent in English and were taught to speak with an American accent throughout their education. Neither reported on any issues regarding having a foreign accent. Moreover, subject C1 mentioned she might have been more interesting because her Slavic accent made her stand out among the twenty other servers with British accents. Subject C2 also mentioned that she only had positive experiences and got a lot of compliments on her Slavic accent because it is a bit unusual in that environment.

**Comment [U2]:** If you see accent as part of this theme, which is fine, make it explicit. Why are accents part of social relations? Do they see them as a way to make their social status better? This needs to be made explicit.

The two British subjects both said that they believe their accents did help them. Subject B2 thinks it is because they sound a bit more formal and this is a wealthy and high class environment so the British accent ‘fits in’. In fact, a lot of people there have told her that the British accent sounds more formal than the American accent. As subject C2 mentioned, the British were even referred to by members as sounding ‘posh’ and ‘classy’ and were asked to pronounce certain words so that they could enjoy the unusual pronunciation.

The subjects however do not think it gave them any real advantages in terms of relationships with members, aside from occasional compliments in and especially out of work in the outside world. They do not see themselves as anything too special because of their accent or nationality because, as both subjects mentioned, this particular country club gets a new ‘set’ of British interns every year. Subject B1 believes that the accent would help her more if she worked in an environment that was not so wealthy and formal already.

Cultural differences can also be seen in the differences in linguistic choices. The following examples show instances of when the students noticed that the reception of some phrases or expressions was not the same, or that it was understood wrong, because of the cultural and linguistic differences between American and British/Croatian people. According to the subjects, there was not too many issues in this regard and everyone felt like members generally picked-up everything quite quickly and adjusted to the waiters. The mistakes from the servers’ side were usually small and easy to fix, justified by the servers being new to the job.

Subject C1 gave an example in which she was serving a table of new members who had recently joined the club. She asked them “Can I take your order”? and the man at the table told her “It is

not “can I”, it is “may I”. You should learn that.” The subject said that she felt very awkward. The subject is fluent in English, but not at a professional proficiency level so she did not see the difference in ‘may’ and ‘can’ in such questions, especially because she was translating directly from her native language (Croatian) where this difference does not exist. Her intention was not to sound informal; her linguistic choice was purely influenced by the linguistic differences. However, she was perceived by the member as too informal and even offensive, which definitely influenced their communication and relations, even if only in that instance. The subject’s discomfort in this situation was understandable because the member bluntly drew attention to the differences between them and demonstrated the aforementioned condescending attitude. Even though this is an example on a small scale, it shows how linguistic choices of both sides can cause feelings of dislike (or the opposite). This shows that social relations are influenced by linguistic choices, especially those which stand out because of cultural differences between parties.

**Comment [U3]:** Again, great, please make explicit how this part is part of social relations.

Subject C2 mentioned that she had a problem in the beginning with learning all the new names of food and beverage items which are served at the club. Here the Croatian servers were at quite a disadvantage from the British students because not only are the British and the Americans culturally more similar and share a lot of the same eating and drinking habits (along with the names for it all) but they are also professionals – hospitality students. Subject C2 claims that she did not know how to spell or pronounce any of the cocktails that people would try to order with her. “I would write down sounds and then try to repeat them to the bartender. It was easier with food, but it was still a struggle because I did not have prior experience in food service, especially in English language in America”. (Ivana 7)

Subject B2 points out that she noticed Americans having a generally more polite and subdued body language than the British. She extends this politeness to their treatment of people. She noticed that an American will sooner help the female servers carry heavy objects and open the door for them whereas a British person just will not. She also said that the Americans do not understand British sarcasm as much and can get offended by them. “Americans often take our jokes too seriously or do not realize something was a joke at all” (Emma 7).

Subject B1 agrees with that notion, saying that the biggest difference was with humor. She explains that this is because the British have a dry humor and Americans more of a silly type of humor and use a lot less sarcasm. “We would often say something that an American person

would not understand at all, just look at us like: “What?” and you have to explain then that you are just joking and you are not being rude.” (Samantha 7) She said that in situations like that she would follow the original joke up with another joke which they would understand so that they know that she has been joking from the start. Subject B1 was then asked a sub question on whether or not her polite expressions had ever been twisted around or outright mocked in order to point out their strangeness. She replied that sometimes yes – the members would laugh, not in a mean way, but to show the servers that they do not need to sound so scared of asking and so formal. She would go up to a table and start saying: “Oh I am really sorry to interrupt your evening etc.” and they would just reply: “It is okay, do not worry, just ask.” The members would make jokes to make the servers feel better, never actually to be rude about it.

However, she also mentioned having some problems at work because of being British. One of the examples of mistakes based on cultural differences was given by both British subjects. In America, chips are crisps, in Great Britain chips are French fries so there were a lot of misunderstandings between the servers and customers which resulted in a lot of wrong orders brought to the tables in the beginning. Other examples of the aforementioned linguistic mix-ups include a queue or a line, jello or jelly or jam etc.

The point of the next question was finding out if the subjects had to avoid some phrases and words in order for the American people to understand them or if they used them even more because they know that the American people will find it charming or funny.

The subject C1 claims that some of the British servers kept correcting her pronunciation of certain words and that she started talking more slowly to communicate better with members and other American people. She also says that she did not change her speech so much, she only kept it formal. This might be because people in Croatia are very influenced by American culture through television and so it was not very difficult for them to get accustomed to their culture. There is no dubbing TV shows in movies and it makes most people learn American phrases and English in general a lot more easily.

Subject B2 states that she had to talk more slowly as well in order to be understood better. She also reminds that there are words in the British variant which the Americans do not understand or confuse with other words, like “chips” or “parcel”, so she had to adapt and start using words that they would understand. She also provides an example of a situation where the Americans working in the kitchen did not understand one of the servers because they put an

order through the computer saying to send out “bare ice cream”, meaning a lot of ice cream in their slang, but the Americans did not understand them and thought that it meant ice cream that is bare, with no toppings on it.

In order to look at the servers’ self-awareness on a greater scale, the subjects were asked to see themselves in regards to the country (and state) they are in with all of its social, historical and cultural background. The subjects were asked if they thought they would be treated differently if they had a different background and if they noticed different treatment of other such people working at the club. I will look into their identity in comparison with identities of others to see if it influences social relations and how the relations are different because of it.

Both subjects from Croatia think the members preferred Croatian people, because of their friendliness, better service and work ethics which was often commented on by the managers. Subject C2 also thinks that Latin-Americans who work there were treated differently, because they are not as educated as the rest of the servers. Members would not even greet them sometimes even though some of them had been working there for years, whereas they learned other servers’ names quickly even though they were there for a lot shorter period of time.

Subject B1 thinks that servers who are not from Britain were treated a little differently than others, but she means it in a negative way which is beneficial to others, not the British. Servers from Britain had been coming there for years so she feels they were not as interesting and unique as others were for their different culture, language etc. The subject gives an example of a server who is from Lithuania who had recently been asked to work a specific event, which is undoubtedly because she is different from the rest and stood out.

She also thinks that the situation is a little complex for the one or two Latin-Americans who work at the club as servers, because their language has to be very good to work there in that position and they must be confident and educated enough to fluently communicate with members, which is why they have to prove themselves more than others. She claims that the club mostly takes servers from wealthier countries who are educated because they have an automatic standard for the things that people here expect.

Education is also an issue here; because the subject thinks that the members are more polite to the British who are more accomplished whereas they treat the Latin-Americans with less care because they know they are not educated and thus cannot afford to leave whatever position they are working at. Moreover, she points to the possibility that the standards in the

Latin-American countries are not as good as in e.g. Britain, so what others see as being unacceptable, to the Latin-American workers is probably very acceptable and they will not complain about the unfair or very bad treatment.

Subject B2 thinks that, because there are so many British people working there year after year, the members are far more fascinated with more 'exotic' people, like the Croats. However, this does not extend to Latin-Americans, who she claims are more 'background people'. The members do not treat them badly, but also do not go out of their way to ask them how they are doing and talk to them. While this does sound like it points to racism and cultural issues, subject B2 thinks it is because of the language barrier. Not only do the Latin-Americans have a very strong Spanish accent, most of them barely, if at all, speak English (some even after twenty years of living and working in America). Jose the busser, for example, actually speaks English very well, but only uses it with the staff and interns and does not show it so much to members.

Social relations from the view of cultural and linguistic differences show that the difference between members and people of different cultural backgrounds is real. It appears that the difference in relations comes mainly from two sources. The first is difference in education; it is more out of convenience for the members to talk to people who are fluent in English and have higher education just like they have. The second one is job hierarchy, which the members appear to respect more than anything and behave accordingly.

On the basis of nationality, this paper differentiates between Americans, the British, Croats and Latin Americans. Relations between American members at the club and Latin-American staff can be better understood if we look at their relationship and perception on a greater social scale.

Americans see Latin-Americans through their well-known shared immigrant identity, which implies a low economic status and level of education. Latin-American immigrants are known to only work at low-income and low-responsibility jobs without prospects of advancing in the field, partly because a vast majority of them does not speak good English. Because of this, members at the club do not engage in conversations with them aside from discussing very basic, simple concepts or they just keep to the service script. This is why the social relations between members and Latin-American staff at the club are not developed. However, it is not necessarily something very negative up to the point of being racist on an ethnic level.

On the other hand, Americans traditionally see Europeans as different in an interesting way in general, however there is a difference in view of the Western Europeans and Eastern Europeans. Americans consider Croats as part of the Eastern European group, which means they perceive Croats as sharing many of the similar characteristics of immigrant identity as the Latin-Americans. This is because there are so many illegal immigrants of Slavic descent (Ukrainians, Russians, Serbs, etc.) working menial jobs in America, just like the Latin-Americans. However, in this particular setting, their general view of people of Slavic descent does not apply. This is because they know all the circumstances of their employment, including the fact that they are students who came there to work legally for a short period of time. Also, because of their levels of education, they are well spoken, showing the influence of education on their linguistic choices. At the same time, because of their background and social status which allows them to be students and go work and travel across America, the Americans do not see them like this is their only opportunity for success (as opposed to Latin-Americans). This means they engage in a different kind of conversations and discussions, on a more complex level, which in turn develops their relations further.

Furthermore, Americans see British servers through their nationality and cultural background as coming from a wealthy, developed country similar to the US. However, because the education level is the same with Croatian and British people, the members do not see them or treat them as different. In fact, both British and Croatian subjects reported on Croats being more popular and exotic in the members' perspective. This might be in part because British people have been working there for years (interns change every year) so they are too familiar with them as a culture already to be fascinated by them.

#### **4.1.2 Treatment and perception**

Setting aside the aspect of treatment and perception through cultural differences, this next aspect of the common theme will deal with perception and treatment viewed from more pragmatic aspects, which will point to social relations.

The subjects were asked for their point of view on how they are perceived and treated, especially considering how it would be at a regular restaurant. Naturally, the subjects felt that it

depends on the member because different members will have different approaches and views on the situation. However, the subjects also unanimously thought that members put themselves in the role of their employer rather than simply staying in the role of a guest at a restaurant, at least to some degree. They also appear to have higher expectations of the service than they would at a regular restaurant because they know exactly how the servers usually perform and how they are supposed to perform at that club. They will be more judgmental because they know all the facts about the club and the way the servers are trained and who teaches them.

All four subjects said that, because of their everyday proximity to the members, they definitely think there is a difference in treatment and perception. The servers claim that the members at the club are not as distant as customers at a regular restaurant would be and that the relationships formed are deeper. Here, the subjects brought the aspect of protection into the focus. Because of the members' familiarity with the job's requirements and servers on a daily basis, do the servers feel that they are more protected or that they are not as protected as they would be at a restaurant which does not get as much repeated service by very important guests?

The members know that if they complain about the service, they will be taken more seriously than they would be at a regular restaurant. Subject B2 goes even further and claims that this familiar relationship only gives the member more power in deciding whether to fire a staff member or not. "Because let us face it, the management would rather get rid of me than one of their top members". (Emma, 1)

Subject C2 held a positive view on the treatment from the members and management claiming that she felt safer and more protected from losing the job for making mistakes more than she would at a regular restaurant. However, she mentioned that precisely because of this familiarity which extends to the students' personal life (this is understandable considering they live and work on the same premise), the possibility of losing the job and therefore the visa can be daunting. This is because the management takes the lives of students in their off work free time into consideration and punishes them for certain behavior. Also, the members holding such an important role could mean that they can influence management to fire servers because of their own feelings of dislike.

Another aspect to consider are the circumstances of the internship and how the members see the subjects through that. The members are familiar with some of the technical facts, such as the long hours they work, the fact that there is no tipping at the club and that they live in a dorm

situation on the premises of the club. They also know that the students have an entire month to travel all across America and that this one year is an excellent cultural and learning experience for them as foreigners.

The subjects all agree that it depends on the member and how much he actually wants to be involved with the club and know all about it. The interns mostly replied that members see their situation as something very positive. The general opinion was that it is because members do not know the real situation. Members only see the good things and perceive it as a very good experience regarding education and experience in hospitality, as well as a unique opportunity to travel. Of course, it has to be put to consideration that management tries to hide anything unpleasant regarding the students' life at the club so it also depends on what they know and what they are told by the students throughout the years. The managers tell them that the students' situation is better than it really is and the interns pretend everything is perfect because they have to.

To explain, what the subjects are referring to when they talk about their bad situation is very long work hours which are achieved by combining two or three shifts in one day, making the interns work for 12 to 16 hours on average (members do not realize this because they do not see them all day nor do they see their schedules). According to subject B1, the living conditions are not up to code because right next to the dorm are the golf course maintenance buildings and the chemicals and manure pours from them on the path surrounding the dormitory. There were also problems with out of order fire alarm systems, showers and dryers etc. Another problem is that the management has a very controlling attitude towards the interns and enforce living rules which are very restrictive and difficult to follow for adult people. The lower than average pay is also an issue, as well as inflexibility in giving days off, where the entire staff goes without a single day off for weeks. The majority of members is not aware of these issues and the students cannot complain because of keeping of professional appearance and maintaining the good image of the club.

To conclude, the situation of servers was viewed in comparison to how it would be at a regular restaurant and whether the members have a positive or negative view of their internship. The subjects reported on greater familiarity, which was evident through the members' higher expectations of service performance. This is because of the members' familiarity with the club itself and all its organizational and functional levels. The familiarity aspect between the members



and servers was increased because of a greater frequency of their encounters, which has positive and negative side effects. Positive side effects are closer and deeper personal relations between them. Negative side effects are based on the interior structure of the country club, in which members are not only in the role of customers, they are also in the role of their employers. Thus, servers feel less protected from them than they would at a regular restaurant because they feel more closely watched and judged by their 'boss' on a frequent basis. However, it was found from the results that members do not know the real aspects of their employment and thus see it only as a good thing, making it seem that the members think the servers should be happy for the opportunity they have in the internship. This influences their treatment of the subjects which was mentioned above.

Through close examination of the common theme of social relations, it was found that they are influenced by cultural and linguistic differences which make the basis for treatment and perception of the servers by members. Treatment and perception were seen through more specific aspects their actual employment.

## **4.2 Inequality and power relations**

The next great common theme is the inequality and power relations between the members and subjects. In order to show how great the social inequality between them is, I will discuss a couple of factors. If we can understand the social differences between the members and servers, we can understand the linguistic choices and behavior as the expected result. The members are very wealthy and powerful and mostly lead a life which fits accordingly. The subjects, on the other hand, are students who work as servers in restaurants for moderate pay and are obviously accustomed to a different lifestyle.

The social difference was evident from the subjects' replies in the interviews. The subjects were asked if they remembered any examples of rude or inconsiderate comments based on social differences and prejudice. Contrary to expected, all of the subjects noticed a similar trait; when the members talk to them they do not acknowledge how much of a difference there is between the server and them. They do not realize or pretend to not know that the servers cannot

possibly afford some things they talk about or even imagine some of the situations they are describing.

The first thing that subject B1 mentions is related to the money and wealth factor. She claims the members would often give suggestions to the servers about what to do when they go travelling for a month. Their suggestions would always be very out of touch with reality. Some of the examples include being recommended a hotel which costs \$400 per night (almost a week worth's pay for the server) and overhearing a member saying: "That is my portion of the dinner from last night" and the check he wrote out to his guest was a check for \$16,000. As servers, they face the incredible gap in wealth between them and the multimillionaires (sometimes billionaires) who dine at the country club every day. She mentioned that just the amount of times she had a table that had spent a thousand dollars on lunch or dinner is astonishing. Alongside seeing and overhearing facts about the lives of members, they make comments and jokes about their wealth among themselves, which made subject B1 often feel awkward and uncomfortable. "I once saw a member pull out money and start picking his teeth with money" (Samantha 6).

The subject thinks that the members are mostly not aware of what they are talking about is impossible for regular people working in the service industry. "I think they genuinely sometimes do not realize that we are too poor to afford some things they talk to us about. Which is of course nicer than them talking about something and then adding: "You obviously cannot afford it." They do not make a difference between us and them while talking to us about our free time" (Samantha 6).

It might legitimately be true that because the members only spend time among people who live similar lives to theirs, they cannot comprehend or do not care how different it is for the hearer when they talk. However, more likely this points to the members pretending not to realize how big the social difference is in order to not threaten the face of the hearer.

At the same time, all of the subjects reported on often being ignored while serving the members. It does not depend on the member in this case, the subjects said that regardless of the occasion or the people at the restaurant, the customers will not find it hard to ignore the servers. What is interesting is, according to subject B2, she could directly look at every person at the table straight in the eye while standing next to the table waiting to be noticed and even say 'Hello' to them, but the members will still ignore the server. "They all know you are there and they will not give you the time of day. You think, okay as soon as this one person stops talking

they will let me talk. The amount of times they do not do that but just continue talking is ridiculous. I have often stood there for easily ten minutes or more just standing and waiting” (Emma 6).

Subject C1 even claimed that such repeated ignoring made her feel like she was “less worthy and barely human to them” (Antea 6). Subject C2 agreed that it is quite obvious through such behavior that the members think they are more important than the servers, as is evident in those situations. Subject C2 is certain that if it was their friend or another member who came to their table, they would stop their conversation right away.

Subject B2 thinks she knows the reason for that kind of behavior. She claims it is because the members are mostly at the top of their companies or at least at a really important position in a business so they have that opinion of themselves as a very important person (the opinion might be completely justified in that regard). However, they bring that attitude to the restaurant and they think that everyone else should wait until they finish talking. She agrees that the members of the club actually truly are very important people. However, their image would be even better if they would stop and listen to people when spoken directly to, especially when they are at places where their work importance does not necessarily automatically apply.

By examining social distance, we reach the question of hierarchy. In the interview, the subjects were asked if they noticed members treating people at different parts of the club hierarchy differently. The subjects all said that there is a clear hierarchy at the club and it can be easily seen through levels of politeness and general attitude of members. Students noticed that the higher up the importance ladder a person is – the better the attitude and politeness of members.

The results showed that members would always follow the rules of power and hierarchy, meaning that they would definitely treat another member better than they would a manager of the club. They would even ignore the manager if the difference in rank between the two was great. In that case the manager would know the right time to leave in order not look like he was being ignored and to save face in front of other people. For the managers of the club, even the current general manager, the members would not even stand up from the table (but would pause conversation, which they would not necessarily do for a server), whereas for another member they definitely would stand up. This is because the member wants to be seen as polite and sociable by everyone at the club in order to look popular and also because of his own personal

gain. Even if the other member is not in his business branch, he can still use the other powerful person for networking purposes and recommendations.

Subject B2 thinks that members put managers before servers because they can get more use out of the managers; the managers can help the members get what they want. She continues on saying that is how a members gets the best tables at dinner, how they get 'squeezed' into the reservations when the restaurants are already full. The subject does not think the members care that much about the people themselves, they only care about getting their own way.

She believes that the members probably also hold more respect for the higher-up managers because the managers are getting at the top of their business so they have mutual respect for them each being successful in their field. That is partly why the members would pause their conversation if a manager came up to their table. If a couple of managers came up to the table, the subject thinks they would first shake the hand of the highest-ranked manager. If a manager and another member came up at the same time, she thinks they would try and keep it open rather than making an obvious difference in their behavior towards either of them.

There is another interesting aspect to be examined in these examples and that is politeness in regards to distance. In this case there is familiarity in the member-intern relationship, which can have a positive side to it and negative one. The positive is that such familiarity, which all subjects confirmed, provides a warmer, friendlier relationship than at a regular restaurant. However, it also means that the members do not have the 'barrier in speech' that requires them to be more polite and less direct purely out of unfamiliarity. If people are close to each other, for example friends and family members, they will feel like they can speak to each other more directly because they feel comfortable together and will not misunderstand a request for an impolite face threatening act. Vice versa, when people are at a distance, social, professional or cultural, they will feel the need to be more indirect because they are not familiar with each other and so cannot predict the other person's reaction. In this regard, their power overrules familiarity, as the familiarity is not as developed, even though it exists. Regarding the power relations between the members and servers, the members hold a lot more power, which makes them feel entitled to a certain treatment and respectively 'allows' them to be more direct and impolite. Even though this is not always the case and members do generally maintain a polite attitude, the power can be seen in the examples below.

Even though power is relative and can be reversed, in this case it could almost never happen. This is because of the pre-fixed setting of service encounters of two types of socially very distant participants (members and servers). The actions they perform are predictable and more-or-less controlled and never vary much from the usual social protocol. This is why the majority of power always stays with the members.

**Comment [U4]:** These parts are great.

The above mentioned power relations can be seen in the following examples. Subject B1 pointed out that important members, such as board members, often have business dinners or meetings during which food is served. In those instances they will expect impeccable service and react in a direct or even rude way to mistakes. They expect silent service and the requests they make then are more direct, shorter and less focused on being polite.

Subject B2 claims that, even though naturally some people are nicer than others, the members are almost always more-or-less direct when making a request. "Sometimes they can be polite about it, they will say: "Oh, when you get a second, no rush." But what they really mean is hurry up and get me whatever I am asking for. They will say it, but what they are really thinking is: "If you are not back within five minutes I am telling your manager"" (Emma 3). It is evident that the members hold the power in that situation.

Subject B2 comments on another interesting way of requesting which she noticed at the club. It is unspoken requests that have become the norm for certain members who are considered VIP guests at the restaurants. Subject B2 says that for members like that expect to be served without having to say their requests, needs or preferences.

Subject B2 gives examples: A middle-aged married couple who automatically assume that they will get their exact, specific wine "topped off" by all servers without asking and they get annoyed if they do not get receive this treatment. It is an automatic assumption that all servers know about this and will not fail to comply because of the importance of this couple. This couple is especially interesting because of the extent to which they go to safe face in front of the country club. They are only to be charged for precisely three glasses of that wine every single time, not because of money as an issue but because they do not admit to drinking more than that. In reality, they often drink excessively and even get quite intoxicated.

The second example is a family of four who will automatically assume that the servers will not pick up their empty plates until they leave even though this confuses the staff and managers and makes the service look bad in front of other guests.

The third example is an elderly woman who always has to have a black napkin on top of a regular white napkin waiting for only her at her specific place at the specific table to match the color of her dress. She always has dinner in a large party and she is always the only person with the black napkin at her table.

Subject B1 recalls a situation with a very high profile member. The management instructed her to take very good care of him because he can be very demanding and rude. Following those instructions, she went to check on the table as the each new course arrived. On the second course the member made a really rude comment about her coming over to their table too much. He made it into a rude joke because they had guests, saying “Oh, I see you are coming here all the time”, sort of like a ‘sly dig’ (Samantha 5). This points to the members’ attempt to manipulate and demonstrate his power in the situation from the hearer by inflicting indirect, uncalled for damage to her positive face. The subject replied in the same manner, jokingly: “Ooh, I am sorry, I just wanted to check on your meals, I just wanted to make sure you had a great experience tonight”, in order to convey the message that she was just trying to do her job, still disguised as a polite joke. It serves to help save the subject’s face in an indirect way, making the member look bad in front of his ‘audience’ (guests accompanying him to dinner) in a subtle way.

Another good example which demonstrates feelings of importance and entitlement caused by self-awareness of power is shown through the question where students were asked to think of when trying to appease an angry customer and maintain politeness even through an argument. It is interesting because it is a situation between a person of a higher rank with more power (a customer being served in this situation) complaining and arguing with a person of a lower rank with a lot less power (a server). The customer does not have to try as hard to “save face” in this type of situation because he was wronged, but if he were to talk directly to a higher ranking person in the restaurant hierarchy (i.e. the Chef, a manager) maybe that would not be the case.

Subject B1 made an interesting observation on the expectations of members as guests at the restaurants at the club. She points out that she mainly worked downstairs in the more casual restaurant. She describes it further: “...where the people are a lot more polite than upstairs in the main dining room. There is a lot less pressure down there for their meals to be exact. Whereas upstairs they host formal events and bring important guests so people get quite upset over

mistakes. In general, I have noticed that people can be quite rude upstairs where there is a higher standard, I've even heard comments like: "I cannot eat this. Take it back, this is inedible".

This also might be an interesting factor to consider when analyzing the members' behavior. The same person in a similar situation might act completely different in each of the two restaurants. It would probably be a subconscious act, however it shows that the people demand and expect the treatment they believe they are entitled to and this influences their behavior more than their actual feelings in a unique situations.

In conclusion, power relations and inequality are mainly influenced by all of the factors mentioned above. It was shown through the examples of demonstrating wealth as means of showing their importance and position on the general social hierarchy. This helped us measure the social distance between members and servers. Regarding members, the results show that it appears they value power and hierarchy above any other values in this respect. They see the servers as holding very little power because they are low on the hierarchy ladder and also because they know a lot about them on a more personal level. The power always stays with the members because they are in the role of customers at a restaurant, but also in the role of employers to the servers.

From the servers' point of view, the social distance is great and obvious through the differences in wealth and social status. The difference is emphasized with the members' behavior, more specifically through being ignored on a regular basis.

All of these results point to a great inequality of power, in favor of the members. They have the implied importance to the extent of not having to say what they want. They expect the staff to know their preferences beforehand and would be offended if a server would not recognize them and acknowledged their importance. This points to feelings of familiarity, however, as was mentioned before, the members' directness is not connected to the positive feelings of familiarity, it is connected to the feelings of entitlement and power overriding necessary politeness expected from their roles in a service setting.

### 4.3 Linguistic choices and non-verbal acts

The third common theme is linguistic choices and non-verbal acts between the servers and members. This theme will show how politeness mechanisms are used through examples, as a consequence of the participants' social relationship and power relations.

Comment [U5]: Great!

The subjects generally agree that common, regular requests are direct, but always polite.

Subject B1 says that 95% of the time the members are all really polite. The subject adds that the children of members are also very polite and know how to behave appropriately in the service setting. Subject C2 also mentioned members' children, saying that because they order a lot of sodas and cocktails for children, they often personally communicate with servers. When they do, they are mostly comfortable in the situation and very well taught how to order politely and they obviously imitate their parents' and other adults' behavior during dinners and similar events. This points to children learning what the roles in service encounters are very quickly and can easily understand the logic behind service scripts.

Subject B2 says that it depends on the members and their mood or personality. She says some are very polite, like in the example of a member saying "Ah, I've had this in the past and it was really nice, but tonight it was not quite right. It was not cooked the way I like it." At the same time, she claims, there are some who complain about every single thing and just say very directly: "I do not like it, take it back. Bring me back another."

When it comes to formality of requests, the subjects found that the linguistic choices of British and Americans differ on a cultural level. Subject B1 noticed that American people are not as formally, excessively polite in their requests as the British. This could point to the fact that, even though they are more polite in regards to humor, greeting people and behavior, in making requests and talking they are not as intrinsically polite as the British are. The British people say their request like they see it as a horrible inconvenience. The subject provides the example of a typical request made by a British person: "I am really sorry, but could you possibly go grab me this"? (Samantha 7). This points to an apologetic use of a negative politeness strategy.

The American people are a lot more forward with asking questions and requesting something, but she claims that the British do not see it as rude, they understand it is a normal request influenced by social differences; it is just a lot more direct. An American person would



just say: “Can I have some more sauce please?” while the British person would feel the need to add a polite apology in the beginning of the sentence.

In regards to more indirect requests, subject C1 claims that if the requests are for something that is considered a lot of time or effort or is very special (for example, food that is not on the menu), they are more indirect. Subject B1 reported on the same thing saying that usually the very indirect members are the people who are very particular about certain things. “For example, we often have this table, an older couple who have been members of the club for the past 40 years. They complain that it is too warm or too cold in the room on a regular basis so they are often very indirect about it. They try to ask in a different way so that we do not notice that they always complain about the same thing.” (Samantha 3) This points to a possibility that saving face, even in front of “unimportant”, “interchangeable” servers, might be more important in their minds than the fact that they are VIP members who are recognized as one of the oldest members of the club. By being very indirect, they save their face without imposing on the hearer.

All the subjects were then asked a sub question about how indirect or direct are requests from the majority of members. This served to find out which politeness strategy (or strategies) are most commonly used. They were offered four examples, from the boldest, most direct to very indirect, off-record request. The examples were about a situation which does not involve food or drinks because then the members know more or less automatically how to behave and what to say. The situation specifically was how the members would choose to ask the servers to turn on the air conditioning.

All four subjects unanimously decided that the most typical requests would be the second most direct (polite but direct, using only a little bit of hedging or putting it in a question form but saying directly what they want) and the off-record example (the members only commenting on the situation but not saying what they want, expecting the server to realize what they want without them having to say it). It was decided that the former of the two was more commonly used. The first example was said to be too direct, and the third example (using compliments in a positive politeness strategy) was said that almost never happens. The subjects claim that the third request was too “delicate” and nobody would put so much effort in being polite to include a compliment in the request. As subject B2 put it: “They know what they want and they know you are not going to say no so why bother saying all that” (Emma 4).

Subject B1 gave an example: “They will definitely say “please” or “can you”. Sometimes they will use an extremely indirect way of requesting like: “Do you not think it is really warm in here? Do not you find it hot in here as well”? and then I’ll answer: “Yes, I’ll go talk to the manager and see if we can turn it off”.

Subject B2 also gave examples: “They are either going to ask: “Oh, it is kind of hot in here, can you turn the air-con on”? or they are going to be like “Ah, it is quite warm” and automatically expect you to click and say: “Ah, you are quite warm? I’ll see if I can get the manager to turn the air-con on”. I would say that the majority of people would say that it is quite stuffy in the room and try to make conversation, not trying to be too direct. But then there is always going to be those who are going to be really direct about it and say: “Can you just turn the air-con on?”.” (Emma 3)

This proves that members mostly use negative politeness in requests, forming their requests with slight, not excessive hedging (usually using modal auxiliaries such as ‘can’, ‘may’ and ‘could’). They form requests directly, but still adjust the level of directness to the rank of imposition. Even though the questions are relatively direct, the subjects claim that they almost always contain an expression of deference, usually just please.

In order to get a better rounded picture of politeness mechanisms in communication between the participants, we will now look into members’ complaints. Subject C1 provides an example of a typical, every day complaint and how she deals with it. “For example, members often complain about their soups: “Excuse me! My soup is not hot enough”! I would then apologize and tell them that I will bring them a new one right away. This is the way it goes in most situations, the customer is always right no matter what.” (Antea 4)

The subjects were then asked a sub question which points to a slightly different situation in which there is more pressure and responsibility on the server. The servers’ involvement is greater because the customer in question is already known to often try to get a complimentary meal by complaining about the food after he already ate most of the dish. The managers put pressure on the student serving the member for the evening to go and check on the member more often, specifically asking if everything is alright with the food. In this way, they could either prevent him from complaining or have ‘proof’ that he confirmed multiple times the meal was alright if he complains. What do the servers do to handle then issue in a situation like that?

Subject C1 replied that this happened to her when she had to serve a table with the members mentioned in the question (the example is based on real people). She asked several times throughout the meal if everything was alright, the member ate more than half of his main course and then complained that the meat was undercooked. The subjects' response was: "I am terribly sorry; I have been to your table once or twice and you did not complain". She let them know in a polite way that she had checked on them already so that they would be reminded that she is fully aware of the situation and in control of the table. In the end, the subject said that the manager had to settle this situation by not charging only that one meal for that one member only because he was persistent. The subject claims that if she had to deal with them alone, she would maybe offer them complimentary cookies because they are always free at the club anyway. In that way, she would maintain the politeness with the customer at least to a certain degree, but at the same time she would save not only her own face, but the face of the club as well by not giving into his attempts to get a free dinner.

Subject B1 replied to the sub question saying that a member had a meal a week ago which he found amazing. He found the same meal a week later after tasteless. The subject replied to that: "We are really sorry, we will take it back and bring you a new one and talk to the chef" and they said: "Oh no, it is fine, I am just letting you know, I am not hungry enough to have the whole thing again, I will just have a small salad or something", so the subject provided them with a new dish, free of charge. She claims that this is the regular procedure in those situations, along with simply apologizing a lot. This way, even though the member kept the threat to them both minimized, the server compensated like she was supposed to, to obtain the power relations as they are supposed to be by the service encounter protocols. This shows the server following the rules of her role as a server in a service encounter. When responding to complaints, servers use a lot of apologies and hedging. In the case of British students this is partially influenced by their culturally defined linguistic style, which is more indirect and formally worded.

Subject C2 holds a firmer attitude in situations like the one mentioned in the sub question. The subject claims that if the member is renowned for doing that, she would probably only offer him a free drink to apologize, but nothing more. She would say: "Oh, I am so sorry it was not up to your standards, would you like a free drink?" and would not follow that offer up with anything more unless she saw a genuine issue with the meal. If the member started to argue after that, she would argue with him for a little bit, but only to an extent of what she is allowed to

do and offer to bring the general manager over as the ultimate move. This points to the server's face being more oriented toward her real, personal identity as opposed to her work identity. If she could let the issue pass in the favor of the member, thinking 'it is nothing personal, just work where my value does not matter, when my shift ends I will not remember this anymore', she would have put her work identity first. However, the sense of her real identity is stronger and thus she does not feel like she should let such situations pass – she does not see the members as having real power over her. Because of this, she can be more impolite and dare to do more direct face threatening acts, as seen in referring to the general manager instead of giving in to the customer.

On the other hand, subject B2 has a different view on her identity in regards to her role of a server. She describes her usual course of actions in such situations, starting with when a person complains about the food. First she finds out what is the reason for the complaint. If it turned out to be a major issue then she would ask them if they want a new dish or something else instead. Then she would tell the manager, take the food back to the kitchen and report to the chef as well. The main thing to remember, she claims, is that the members will always get a new dish, they are always right. Usually the servers send a manager over to talk to them because the managers know how to keep them happy while they are waiting for their food to be cooked, which is a good way of controlling the member by sending a person who is higher ranking in the hierarchy and carries more power. This points to subject B2 having her work identity separate from her real identity, as opposed to subject C2. This is evident in her not getting upset over any complaints or request which are too direct. She keeps to her protocol, saying that the customer is always right and there is nothing more to discuss in the situation which she sees as simple and black and white. This also means that she probably sees more of a social difference between herself and the customers, as well as that she does not question their power on a greater, less personal scale.

This takes us to the question of linguistic choices made in social encounters from both sides. The main focus is to further gain insight into situations where the subjects made mistakes and what influences the linguistic choices in the reactions of both participants. Naturally, the level of politeness depends on the person, their mood and the gravity of the mistake or accident which occurred. The subjects, as was already mentioned, generally noticed the same level of politeness of members. They claim that the members mostly maintained at least the basic level of

politeness. However, it must be taken into account that they are well trained servers who never crossed any major boundaries or made any huge mistakes. The mistakes made were usually putting in the wrong order through the computer system while in a rush and consequently bringing the wrong dishes or drinks to the table. In general, the members mostly maintain a polite language, but demonstrate their displeasure by their tone of voice. The language is always pretty calm, it is more the tone of voice, facial expressions, speed of their talking and how they are talking. It is not what they are saying, it is how they are saying it. This points to a connection between the members' social importance, wealth and power with their preferring to use paraverbal and non-verbal face-threatening acts rather than being directly verbally impolite.

This brings on the servers' point of view and how they deal with mistakes and complaints. In cases like that, members mostly stay polite about the issue and the servers fix the mistakes as soon as possible in an overcompensating manner. The general opinion from the subjects was that when the servers make a mistake, the members are usually too shocked to say anything in the first second. At this point the servers start to apologize. They overcompensate in their apology so that the members' anger will subside and their ego will be flattered by the indication to their importance. If they apologize profusely and pretend like it was the worst mistake in the world, the members do not feel so wronged about what happened and say: "Oh, no, it is fine, do not worry about it, it is only a spilt drink" or something along those lines. By "manipulating" the members with excessive humility, they are "guilt tripping" them into having a guilty conscience if they continue to berate them for the mistake.

Subject B2 recalls an unpleasant situation. A server (not any of the subjects) spilled wine on the shirt of a member who is paralyzed. He is disabled to the extent that he cannot defend himself and his wife got angry. The wife took the issue to a manager and complained about the server because this accident put them at a great inconvenience (having to go home and change his wet and now dirty shirt while the other ten guests to their dinner party were supposed to arrive soon). She also told the server to be more careful in a harsh tone of voice which would be considered impolite by most people. The server was devastated about making the mistake and apologized profusely. Still, the wife was not very polite about it. However, it was more her tone and expressions which were angry and impolite, her choice of words was still polite. You could tell she was upset by what she said and how she said it, particularly because, according to the subject, they are very nice and pleasant people on a regular day. "She just wanted to express her

annoyance more than anything, but you could tell that she did understand that it was a mistake, an accident” (Emma 5).

Subject B2 has an interesting perspective to offer on this subject. She agrees that the members are rarely really rude. However, she thinks that the reason people are rarely really rude to the servers is that they know the servers cannot really say no to them either way, pointing again to the fact that they hold all the power.

She goes even further in saying that she think that is the biggest reason why people get impolite - because they are not getting their own way. She thinks that is how it goes in life in general; people will start off as reasonably polite, say what the problem is, they might have a higher, angrier tone of voice but they will still remain quite calm. It is only when they see that they will not get what they want out of the situation that they start using impolite language and get angry. At the club, people do not even get a chance or need to get angry because they are pretty much going to get what they ask for straight away, with a side of an apology.

Subject B1 continues with her examples on the topic of overcompensation, saying that, although most members are polite as a basic standard, there are entire families who can be directly impolite. “For example the Filly guy and his family. He will ask you for something and expects you to go out of your way to do it, he expects everything from you. And you have to be extra polite with them. I have also had an old lady grab my arm. We were having a very busy night and she grabbed me and said: “We are still here.” So I started explaining how I had to go upstairs to get their special drink and I apologized a lot. I always try to be super extra polite when someone is rude because I hope it makes them feel awkward. I should not be rude so I try to be extra polite back; you have to be polite anyway so you might as well be really polite and feel like you got your tiny little revenge. Especially if they have guests and the member tries to make a fool out of you. In those situations I do not want to seem like I am really doing a bad job so I always try to explain that I am actually trying to do my job” (Samantha 5). This example is a direct demonstration of feeling of entitlement based on their own awareness of the power they have. Because to some this power can be more important than keeping appearances in front of others, they will let themselves be bold and rude in their requests and comments.

Subject B1 mentions an even more extreme example of direct impoliteness, such as to angrily say “This is disgusting” or “I cannot eat this”, at which point she says there is nothing to say but apologize. That reaction makes sense because the member exerts his power in the

situation by being so extremely direct, to the point that he is too threatening and intimidating and the subject is aware that she is so far from his level on the power and importance hierarchy, she cannot even think of any adequate replies. In those situations no discussion is possible in the eyes of both parties. This is an example of the fifth politeness strategy, which is not doing the face threatening act at all. Because of the combined social factors relating to the member (power, entitlement and importance) and the boldness of his complaint which is said in an angry tone of voice and expression, the subject decided not say anything. The subject calculated that anything she says will further aggravate the member and do damage to his face, even apologies.

Subject B1 spoke of the worst mistake she made in front of a member and what her reaction was. She responded that she has her own way of dealing with situations in which she is to blame for the mistake. The subject will sometimes try to pretend, if possible, that nothing happened and maybe the member does not even notice. "They do not realize that I made a mistake. I was pouring wine once and it dribbled down the bottle over a ladies bag. I just walked away and I do not think she noticed" (Samantha 5). If she mentioned the mistake, she would definitely have a problem with the member. However, the ethics behind the act are questionable. Of course, accidents like that can happen to anyone, especially overworked servers with a big section of tables who have to run and multitask in order to please everyone. Still, this is a potential example of hidden impolite behavior, where the subject helps keep her positive face by keeping the power in the situation the only way she knows how. By doing this, the subject disregards the social distance and power the member has. This is an opposite to the example mentioned before this one because here the subject keeps her own face and has a sense of gained balance of power, even if it is not acknowledged by anyone else but her.

To sum, politeness of linguistic choices of both members and servers are influenced by social relations, power relations and inequality between them. Linguistic choices and acts were examined through two important aspects of communication in a service setting: requests and complaints. Two factors were taken into consideration - linguistic choices or acts by members and the responses of servers. In regards to requests, members were noted to be generally direct, but polite in most cases. However, extreme cases of bold directness were also mentioned, even though they do not happen often. The difference between members and servers in terms of formality is also noted, mostly defined by their cultural differences as Americans and the British. According to the data acquired from subjects, the British are very formal in their requests and

use a lot of hedging and apologies. In general, they are more likely to be indirect. On the other hand, Americans are seen as more direct in their requests. This is obviously influenced by social and power relations between the servers and members, however it could partially be because of their assigned roles and script in the service setting, which contains utterances of conventionalized indirectness. This means that they are not actually always direct on purpose, it is because many utterances in service encounters are pre-set and established in society. Members are also noted to be indirect in instances where the imposition they put on the server by their request is of a higher ranking. The members consider saving their and the server's face more important than the power they have in those cases.

All of these factors show which politeness strategies the members use most often. Subjects have reported that negative politeness is used in most cases. The members use on record negative politeness because that way they will have the benefit of paying respect to the server, all the while maintaining the social distance, displaying their superiority in power and not advancing familiarity through the interaction. Because of their social distance and power relations, this is desirable to members and more appealing than using positive politeness, which they have no inclination to use. On record bold requests are rarely necessary and do not fit with the member's social status so most of them avoid using them. On the other hand, off record, or extremely indirect requests and complaints, are not effective enough for members and do not work with the intrinsic logic of service encounters where the role of customer is required to say his wants. In regards to servers dealing with complaints of members, the main strategies used are apologies and overcompensation. The speakers inflict damage to their own positive face, but in such an excessive manner that they 'manipulate' members into reciprocal saving of face. Taking these factors into account, we gain perspective into the general interaction patterns between the members and servers.



## 5. Conclusion

The results of this paper showed in what way different factors can influence politeness in communication. Basic terms and notions needed to understand these factors and the results themselves were defined in the theoretical background. Through research in the form of an interview, subjects provided examples and descriptions of the interrelation, communication and levels of politeness between them and the members.

Participants in this case were always in very specific roles and situations, which needed to be examined in detail in order for their interactions to be understood. Even though each occurrence depends on the participants, their moods, individual personalities and a number of other different factors, the results did point to shared patterns in behavior. Members are in the role of customers, which allows them to make requests, demands and complaints to the other participant, the server. In researching social relations between the servers and members, the results show that their relationship is complex because of the specific nature of their identities and encounters. The familiarity between them goes beyond what it would be like in a regular restaurant precisely because of the specific circumstances of their service encounters.

The research proposed the idea that, along with the nature of their roles, social status and identity give a lot more power to one side in the interaction (the customer), which also influenced politeness in interactions. A difference in power and hierarchy is evident and, combined with all of the other factors, gives the full image of the complexity in the particular encounters of this research.

The results show that there definitely are repeated behavioral patterns in terms of politeness. The focus was primarily on the utterances of members, but on servers as well. Members predominantly used negative politeness as a strategy when dealing with servers. The difference in social hierarchy and the greater familiarity between them allowed members to be more direct in requests or complaints on occasion, even in front of an audience. However, their cultural and social background held their utterances at a polite level they were accustomed to using.

The servers, on the other hand, mainly dealt with great social distance, along with problems caused by cultural and linguistic differences. The servers predictably acted according

to social norms in regards to all the circumstances of their encounters with members. The servers apologized when met with anger, bold directness and complaints, putting their job identity as more important than their personal identity in most cases. However, because of the personal backgrounds of servers (being educated and well spoken, coming from developed countries, etc.) and the fact that the servers do not hold those service roles in their regular lives, they often felt inclined to save their own face regardless of roles and inequality of power. However, it was mostly done in a polite, subtle manner, usually by using overcompensation in apologies.

This research on a complex example of participants in service encounters demonstrated that politeness mostly does depend on roles and social norms, overriding the personal wants of self, and regardless of power. Power and hierarchy plays a big role because, on a bigger scale, all of the participants followed (and expected the others to follow) the levels of the hierarchy in using politeness and amount of redress and deference. Those notions did not change regardless of familiarity and their interrelation, proving that at the end of the day, a person at the top of the hierarchy (the member) will follow the rules of politeness and override his potential wants of overpowering the person with less power. However, the member will continue to see the server as only a server, and another member as an opportunity from the closer levels of the hierarchy.

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